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ABSTRACT

This is a descriptive outline of the language situation in the Danish education system. The introductory material discusses the reason for foreign language study. A major reason is that Denmark is a small country with a difficult native language for speakers of other languages to learn. Therefore, the Danish population is exposed to foreign languages through the media, tourism, and international business. The paper then describes the following: (1) the educational system and requirements, and the basic outline of the foreign language course from elementary school through the university: (2) contents of the course of studies in English, French, and German, including a description of the final evaluation at the end of the undergraduate program and a brief notation on language study at the graduate level; and (3) the shift in emphasis toward more flexible curricula and the special objectives of university level courses, which extend beyond communicative competence. (AMH)

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# STUDIES IN THE MAJOR MODERN LANGUAGES (ENGLISH, GERMAN, FRENCH) AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN DENMARK BY 1980/81

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## I.0 International Background with Special Reference to Linguistic Problems

With c. 5 million inhabitants Denmark is a small country. Information about the outside world is of vital interest financially, educationally, etc. for the country to compete successfully, e.g. in industry, with other nations which have larger populations and natural ressources - of which Denmark have next to none. Information from abroad, i.e. invariably in other languages, is transmitted either indirectly or directly: Indirectly by means of translations (Denmark ranks high in the Index Translationum); and directly by means of personal and written contacts between Danes and foreigners, as well as the electronic mass media (radio, television). The influence of the barrage of foreign-language material via the media cannot be underestimated: more than 50% of the media material is of foreign provenance. It is not interpreted, synchronised or translated: although films both in cinemas and on television are subtitled, the auditive foreign-language bombardment is immense: 1.8 million households have a television set and about 2 million a radio (virtually always combined with television).

Linguistic transmission thus pervades Danish life, and it is of prime importance that the quality is as high as possible: this we must take care to ensure ourselves, for the obvious reason that few foreigners are interested in learning the difficult language of a small nation. This, in turn, reflects on our attitude to foreign-language teaching and the demands made on graduates in the foreign languages, especially in our major foreign languages, English, German, and French.

## II.0 National Educational Background of Students.

The Danish school system calls for an obligatory, basic schooling of 9 years. Pupils start at the age of 7, and finish school after the 9th or the 10th year with, respectively, a "minor" or a "major" 'folkeskoleprøve'. Approximately 40% of the pupils in the age group then moves on to the 'gymnasium' (cf. Table 1).

Especially after the first 7 years, the basic school comprises many "electives". This means that the number of lessons actually attended by pupils at the same "nuclear" class who take in the same obligatory lessons in e.g. Danish, may vary between 16 and 34 lessons a week, viz. from the pupils who want to attend only the minimum number of classes to those who want to attend the maximum.

The 'gymnasium' is divided into specialist lines e.g. "mathematics" and "languages", and in the second year these are subdivided into branches (or sublines), e.g. "mathematics and physics"; "mathematics and social sciences"; "modern languages", etc. All pupils must attend 30 lessons a week, independent of branch.

As far as foreign language teaching is concerned, English starts at the 5th year of the 'folkeskole'; German at the 7th; French and Latin are electives or optional during the last year of the 'folkeskole'.

At the 'gymnasium', foreign-language teaching varies according to the "branch". The languages of immediate interest in the present context are English, German and French, and Table 1 indicates the number of classes given at each stage at selected lines or branches.

French is obligatory at all lines and branches, except in the relatively few cases (less than c. 5%) where the students prefer or the schools offer the alternatives of Russian, Spanish, or Italian.

Both English and German are obligatory for pupils doing the modern languages line. Elsewhere English alternates with German in principle, although, in practise, the vast majority of pupils opt for English. English is, simply stated, the most popular of the foreign languages.

From the very number of lessons (cf. Table 1), it follows that the students' backgrounds in any given language will vary considerably from line to line, which, in turn, affects university teaching as well.

At all levels there are some official guidelines as to the pedagogical aims and - to a lesser degree - to the contents of the foreign language teaching.

However, the actual teaching methods and the choice of the texts used are the responsibility of the teachers, often in cooperation with the students. Despite this freedom, a certain uniformity is maintained by means of national examinations which are held at the end of the 9th or 10th year of the 'folkeskole', and at the end of the 3-year 'gymnasium'. Nationwide, the written tasks set are identical, whereas the orals are based on selections of texts made by the individual teachers, but overseen by teachers from other schools. They act as moderators (or 'censors') and set the individual marks in cooperation with the pupils' own teachers.

In the language field, both instruction and exams have, in recent years, been characterised by a shift towards more emphasis on "communicative competence", i.e. the viewpoint that it is more important that individual students are able to express themselves intelligibly and understand the foreign language well, rather than to express themselves in a formally correct manner. This shift in teaching emphasis is based on the assumption that in later life most students should be able to manage with this type of command of a foreign language (i.e., in personal contacts): Formal writing is best left to experts, viz., professional typists or translators trained at the schools of Economics and Business Administration.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF WEEKLY LESSONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE DANISH SCHOOL SYSTEM PRIOR TO UNIVERSITY((simplifie

FOLKESKOLEN: 1-loth year, 9 years obligatory. Starting age, c. 7 years.

| | | No. of lessons a week (total) | Foreign language teaching START | No. of Classes a Week: Eng | Germ. | French |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 20 | | | | |
| | | 20 | | | | |
| | | 23 | | | | |
| | | 25 | | | | |
| | | 29 | English (intensive (small classes)) compulsory | 3 | | |
| | | 30 | | 3 | | |
| Minor folke-skoleprøve: 9 yrs. | Some classes are optional/ elective | 27-30 | German (elective) | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 22-34 | | 3 | 4 | |
| Major folke-skoleprøve: 1o yrs | | 22-34 | | 3 | 4 | |
| | | 16-34 | Latin or French (elective) | 3 | 4 | 4 |

GYMNASIUM: 4o% of the population in the age group move on to it. Pupils can enter from either 9th or loth year of the 'FOLKESKOLE'. The total number of classes is fixed at 3o a week. After the 2. year the pupils can choose between various 'branches' under the main lines. The following table is highly simplified and covers only selected (but popular) lines/branches.

| BRANCH/LINE | LANGUAGE | Number of weekly lessons 1st year | 2nd year | 3rd year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Modern language line: | English | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| | French (or Russian/Spanish/Italian) | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| | German | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Music/Social sciences: | English (or German) | 3 | 5 | 0 |
| | French (or etc. (cf. above)) | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Mathematics: | English (or German) | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| | French (or, etc. (cf. above)) | 5 | 3 | 3 |





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## III.0 The Two Types of Universities.

The present paper centres on foreign language teaching at the "old, traditional universities" (Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Odense), and uses the programmes at the first one for illustrations.

There are, however, two 'university centres' (at Roskilde and Aalborg). Their enrolment is fairly small: less than 10% of the total student population.

They show one marked difference from the traditional universities, as the one or two first years are spent on introductions to scholarly and scientific methodologies common to related fields, e.g. the humanities and pedagogics; and the natural sciences. After this period of basic training, the students branch out in their special field, e.g. one or two modern languages.

The university centres are not popular with students of languages, and there is a widespread feeling that the 'basic-year' idea, however good in principle, entails a weakened contact with the foreign languages the students will eventually study, and that it is therefore detrimental to their final results.

In principle, however, modern language studies at the centres comprise the same content areas as those at the old universities. Accordingly, their special systems are disregarded here. It should be noted, though, that the attendance rate in classes is much higher than at the traditional universities, and the drop-out rate is comparatively low.

## III.1 Admission and Future Prospects.

There is no formal entrance examination at university for students who have finished the 'gymnasium'. Admission is determined nationwide. It covers all universities and university centres simultaneously by a complex system whose mainstays are the average marks made by the students at the 'gymnasium', and the quota allotted to the institution they want to study at. At present, 1981, a total of c. 1,700 new undergraduates (average age c. 19), matriculate at the humanities departments at our 3 universities and 2 university centers. Once they have been admitted to the humanities section at a university, they are free to choose any field they wish to study.

Approximately 25-35% go in for modern foreign languages (especially English, German, French, Spanish, Italian), as opposed to e.g. Danish, history, and psychology. It follows, then, that although the students' choices of specific languages at this stage may have been affected by previous schooling, e.g. the 'gymnasium', they are primarily determined by personal inclination, rather than the marks obtained in the foreign language at school.

Graduates from the modern language departments at university are traditionally employed as teachers, especially at the 'gymnasium', teachers' training colleges, and university. But they may also take other jobs, e.g. as consultants at editing houses, as administrators, and as translators. These untraditional jobs are not systematically opened up to university graduates in modern languages, and it is up to the graduates themselves to ferret them out.

Even though these untraditional jobs are increasingly sought out by university graduates, most students still tend to look to schools and teachers' training colleges as their future places of work even though there are by now very few openings. This bias, however, still affects their choice of classes and, indirectly, the classes offered by teachers. The university system is, therefore, more geared towards the secondary school system that it ought to be.

## III.2 Length of Study, Student Attendance, Staff.

Although the students' motivation must be high, the drop-out rate is also high: c. 20% within the first years of study, and reaching 50 - 75% before the finals. Drop-out is determined by the students themselves who are free to leave - or for that matter put off their studies for some years - and rarely by performance at exams: students can pass exams any time they wish, i.e. they may put them off until they feel they can pass them (with the proviso that certain stipulated periods must not be exceeded if they receive state grants). Students are, furthermore, permitted to try to pass any specific exam three times, and are frequently allowed to give it even more tries if they have passed other exams.

The studies are, in principle and theory, designed to be completed in 4 to 5 years, but in fact they do, on an average, take about twice that long.

There are two very obvious reasons why the studies take that long: the first one is insufficient state support for students, which means that most students have jobs on the side. And the second reason is that there is an old tradition of liberalism accepted by both students and teachers: in principle it should be possible, even for those students who never attend any class, to pass all exams on the basis of their own individual studies of books, topics, etc., and their individually organised visits to or studies in the country whose language they study. This is at least part of the reason why there is no tab on students in class; they are free to choose what classes to attend among those offered by the staff; and they may attend only part of a given class and cover the rest by homework. In most cases contacts with teachers are established only when the students themselves feel the need for guidance and advice.

Full-time staff spend c. half their working time on research, the underlying philosophy being that university teaching must be constantly updated, and that this can be done only by teachers who are also scholars and trained in the methods of research. It is also considered a prerequisite for their ability to pass on to students a critical approach and outlook on new information.

On an average the full-time teacher prepares for c. 3-4 hours per lesson, but in fact preparation varies from virtually none to well over 10 hours, depending on topic, etc.

In addition to the full-time teachers, most departments employ part-time teachers, frequently on a par (as to teaching areas) as the full-time staff, although they are paid for only 1½ or 2½ hours of preparation per lesson.

The teaching periods, the 'semesters' last 13 to 14 weeks, and start c. 1 September, and c. 1 February. They are followed by a 1 - 1½ month exam period.

## IV.0 The Basic Outline of Foreign Language Studies.

In principle and according to the curricula, humanities studies, including foreign-language studies at university level, consist of three stages:

The first stage is 'Bifag' og '1. del', i.e. a "minor", two-year study of the language, literature, and to some extent the social set-up in the country.

The second stage is 'Hovedfag' or '2. del' which follows '1. del/bifag'. This "major" is theoretically scheduled to last another two years, and penetrating deeper into the foreign language, culture, scholarly theories, etc.

The third stage, is 'licentiatgrad', a project-oriented two to three-year study following a 'hovedfag'.

One 'hovedfag' merits the title of 'cand.phil.'. This is enough for getting jobs at e.g. university level, the untraditional areas, etc.

One 'hovedfag' and one 'bifag' gets you the title of 'cand.mag.'. This qualifies for jobs at the 'gymnasium', teachers' training colleges, universities, and in the untraditional areas.

The 'licentiatstudium' leads on to the degree of 'lic.phil.' and qualifies for university teaching and for jobs in the untraditional areas.

It will be noted that 'cand.mag.' is the most flexible degree both in terms of content since students can combine any two content areas,e.g. social sciences and English, Danish and Italian; and in terms of chances of future employment which are greatly increased by the high number of content areas

taught at the 'gymnasium', and the inbuilt flexibility in the combination of 'hovedfag' and 'bifag'. C. 67%-75% of the students become 'cand.mags.', while the 'lic.fil.' is not often sought: less than 1% attempt to take it.

The general outline is illustrated in Table 2, which follows on the next page.

Except for the fact that the 'licentiatstudium' is in the process of superseding the former 'magisterstudium' as the highest level of studies within the humanities, the outline given on p. 8 is essentially the one which has applied to Danish university studies ever since the introduction of the 'Skoleembedseksamen' (viz. 'the examination for teachers for the 'gymnasium'') in 1883.

Thus, for instance, there has always been a gap between the time stipulated in the guidelines, and the time actually spent.

As for contents, however, the programmes described on the following pages date from the early to mid-1970ies. Although it is difficult to assess all the advantages and disadvantages in these new programmes as yet, they are the logical outcome of recent developments, e.g. the disparity between the high number of students admitted to university in the 1960ies and the early 1970ies and the limited number of jobs in their traditional fields (i.e. the schools); and intensified international cooperation and communication: the studies have, in other words, become much more amendable to special and individual needs arising from students or society.

At each university the individual departments are ultimately responsible for the contents of the specialty studied (e.g. English or German). This goes for the drawing up of guidelines for exams, for determining the nature and number of content areas, the classes offered, all of which rests with the curriculum committee ('Studienævnet' which usually has 8 members, half of which are students). This might lead to a total lack of uniformity but there are a number of checks that ensure a certain uniformity between similar studies at the different universities:

In the first place, guidelines are approved by the Ministry of Education.

Secondly, all departments have exams where outside moderators (usually chosen nationwide) are present - although other exams are "internal" which means that the moderator is another member of the staff than the teacher.

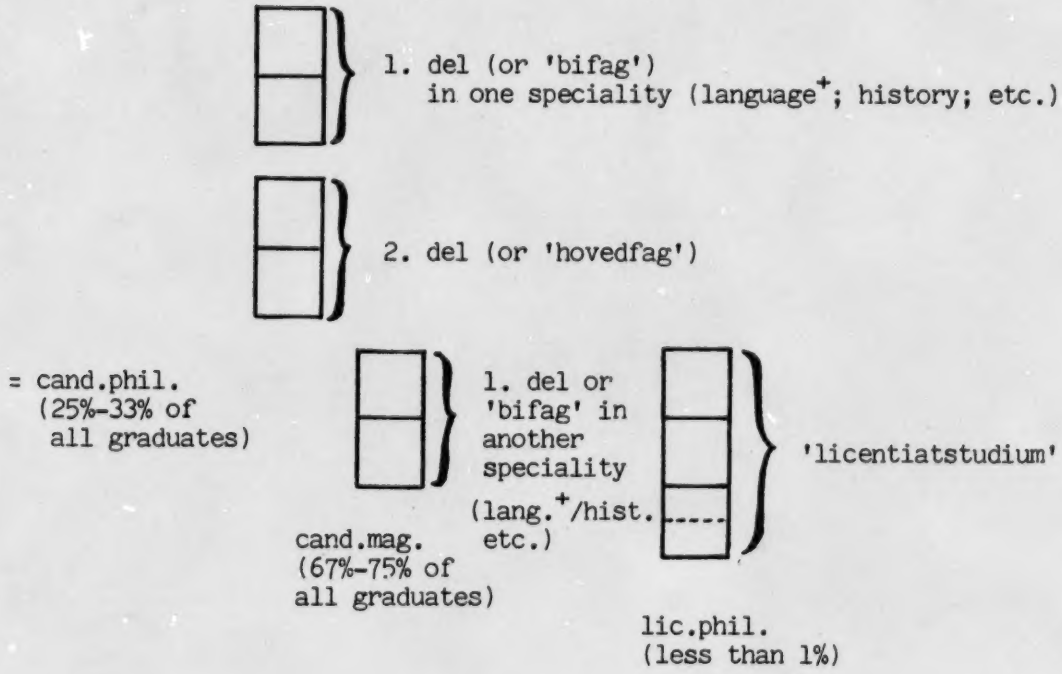
The best proof that the similarities are greater than the dissimilarities is that virtually all prospective employers pay more attention to the candidates' marks in the relevant disciplines than to the question of which of the five universities they graduated from.

So although the following description of specific foreign languages is based on the programmes at the University of Copenhagen in 1980/81, the main points hold good for all Danish universities.

TABLE 2

TYPICAL UNITS OF STUDIES AT THE HUMANITIES SECTIONS OF DANISH UNIVERSITIES

One cubic indicates one year - stipulated according to official guidelines, whereas the actual time is usually twice as long.




Language: this can be any one language, e.g. Danish, English, German, French, Spanish. The humanities cover approximately 5o specialties.

## V.0 The Contents of the Studies

### V.1 'Bifag'/'1.del'

Since graduates will often have to use the skills and knowledge acquired from 'bifag/1.del' in much of their future work, it tends to be rigid and to concentrate on what is considered the basic essentials, although it is also tacitly assumed that there will be some transfer of skills from the 'hovedfag', no matter what it is. This means that most content areas at exams are well-defined and compulsory, and by implication, that most courses taught at the '1.del' level are well attended albeit not compulsory.

At the exams, the students must demonstrate that they master certain, specified minimum skills, and have some basic, specified knowledge of the foreign language, literature, culture, etc. (Teachers at the 'folkeskole' and 'gymnasium' are expected to try to update their educations once they have started to work professionally).

This is amply illustrated by the exams that students have to pass at the English, German, and French Departments at the University of Copenhagen:

#### V.1.1 ENGLISH:

1. A written paper on language: in Danish, 6 hours, no use of text-books allowed. It covers, (a) a discussion of one or more problems in modern English grammar; (b) a test of phonetics (e.g. a phonetic transcription or a discussion of specific problems, and (c) theoretical linguistics.
2. Oral proficiency (fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation).This is tested by means of a text handed out to the student 30 minutes before the exam starts. Duration: 15-20 minutes.
3. Translation: 5 hours, no dictionaries allowed. One Danish text, length app. 300 words to be translated into English: an English one of the same length to be translated into Danish.
4. A written test on literature: in English, 6 hours: books and encyclopedias etc. allowed. An interpretation of one or more pre-set literary texts.
5. Modern English or American Society. Based on two hours a week for a two-semester period and with extensive reading by the students themselves, students may either do the exam at a 6-hour supervised sitting at university, or at home (6 weeks). Most prefer the latter type of exam.

6. An oral test of literary interpretation. It comprises 3 different content areas (e.g. one author; a group of authors; a genre; some special historical period). These content areas have been studied intensively (and usually to a large extent by the students themselves). Each area comprises c. 1000 pages. They form the basis for one oral exam lasting 40-45 minutes after a 45-minute period where the student prepares to answer the question(s) set by the teacher on a passage from one of the texts in one of the three content areas. Although this exam is conducted in English, the oral proficiency is not tested/marked, unless it is so poor that it impedes understanding.

7. A 'tilvalg', i.e. an elective minor area of study. It is based on teaching and reading an optional area, e.g. Old English, Gaelic, Classical Background, accruing from one 'semester' of c. 6 lessons. The exam consists of a take-home paper of c. 20 pages usually written in English, but occasionally in Danish.

V.1.2 GERMAN

1. Theoretical grammar: 4-5 hours for a written paper where students discuss a problem in modern German grammar found in authentic German texts. The use of the textbooks which the students must know (1,000 pages) is not allowed at the exam.

2. Literary interpretation and literary history: It is based on 10 long and 30 brief literary texts from after 1740 which have been chosen and studied by the students. This exam comprises two tests:

A. A paper which is prepared at home and must not exceed 10 pages. It is presented at an oral exam where it is followed by a 45-minute discussion on the paper, or any other text the student has listed as read.

B. A written exam,which lasts 6 hours. Here the students must write an essay on a literary text outside the list submitted. The students are allowed to use a German-German dictionary.

3. Phonetics. Listening to a tape-recording of a Dane speaking German (in the language laboratory), the students must diagnose errors, explain their causes, and suggest improvements; in addition they must answer some theoretical questions in writing (2 hours).

4. History of language: this is a minor course which introduces students to the basics of synchronic linguistic description, i.e. Middle High German and Old New High German. Considered passed if students have attended 80% of the lessons.

5. German history: based on the study of a major historical (18th-20th C.), or/and/on modern social life in Germany. The students list 150-250 pages from these works as studied intensively. The students must pass a written exam (in Danish) where the use of background material is permitted.

6. Translation consists of two exams, both lasting 3 hours, and it covers sourcetexts of c. 350 words.

A. A Danish text is translated into German: the students may use a German-German dictionary.

B. A translation into Danish of three brief German excerpts from (a) a newspaper; (b) a work of fiction, and (c) a spoken message.

7. Oral proficiency: a 15-minute talk, based on a text chosen by the teacher. There is time for preparation where the student has access to a German-German dictionary.

8. Proficiency in writing is tested by means of a paper of 600-900 words, written within 3 hours.

V.1.3 FRENCH

1. Translation: It consists of two exams both with source-texts of c. 1,600 typographical units.

A. One French text to be translated into Danish where the use of a French-French dictionary is permitted.

B. A Danish text to be translated into French and where the use of Danish-French, French-Danish, and French-French dictionaries is permitted.

2. Written grammar: The students must discuss 3-4 major problems in a pre-set text, to show they master French syntax and morphology (verbs, nouns, pronouns, etc.). (5 hours).

3. Written phonetics: It comprises a phonetic transcription, and discussions of one or several phonetic problems based on one out of three texts. They are handed out for the 5-hour exam.

4. Interpretation/literary analysis: The students work at home for 1 or two weeks and then hand in papers on two texts, one a work of fiction, the other a brief text (with a choice between three types, viz. a poem; non-fiction prose; or prose fiction). All texts have been discussed in class.

5. Proficiency in writing is tested by having students summarise a text in half its original length. There is a choice of two texts and the use of a French-French dictionary is permitted at the exam which lasts 5 hours.

6. A total of 5 different exams in specific content areas. The exams take place at the end of a term where the students have usually attended a class of two hours a week on the topic in question. Two content areas, viz. "a literary period" and "presentday French society" are obligatory, whereas the other three are chosen by the students themselves (e.g., some literary field; French society after 1945). The background reading required must not be less than 200 pages, and the total for all five exams must be at least 1,400 pages: 3 exams are oral, 2 written papers.

7. Oral proficiency and pronunciation: the students themselves determine the topic to be discussed, but the teacher chooses the actual text used.

V.1.4 Additional Comments.

It is entirely up to the individual students to determine the order in which they want to pass the exams - and, in some cases, the students are also permitted to do a 'group-exam', where two or more students hand in a joint paper. This goes for e.g. the exams in modern English and American Society at the Department of English, and the minor exams at the French Department.

V.2 'Hovedfag'/'2. del'

The most important constituent of the 'hovedfag' is the so-called 'speciale', i.e. an undergraduate thesis whose length varies from student to student (50-200 pages). In the writing of it, the students are to demonstrate that they can master a complex content area and can analyse it critically, that they can express themselves intelligibly, and that they master the techniques of literature search; in sum, that they are familiar with scholarly methods and approaches and can work independently (which they will have to do once they are outside university). The 'speciale' is always marked by an outside moderator in cooperation with the teacher who has been at the student's disposal for guidance, which varies considerably according to student needs.

The topic is chosen by the students themselves according to their interests, and may be from any area with languages, literature, and social-historical backgrounds, as is amply illustrated by some titles from some of the 'specialer' from the language departments: "The Use of Subtitles in English-language Programmes by Danish Television Audiences" - "The Shop-Soiled Galahad. The Detective in Fiction and his Abortive Chivalrous Quest in the Stories of Raymond Chandler" -

"British Labour and the General Strike of 1926: the Development of the British Labour Movement in the 19th and the 20th Centuries" (all from the Department of English). "A Comparison between Descartes' and François de Sales' Attitudes to some Basic Philosophical Problems (Consciousness, Free Will, and God)" - "Disappearance of 'ne' in Modern Spoken French" (Both from the Department of French). "Women in the Novels of Th. Fontane with Special Reference to the Polarity between Nature and Society" - "Words of Negation in Modern German" (both from the German Department).

The vast majority of the 'specialer' are written in Danish, but occasionally in the foreign languages. Both students and teachers consider the 'speciale' important, and even though the stipulated time is c. 5-6 months, they average twice as long - topics are often being contemplated years before the students really get down to doing the 'speciale'. Because of the importance attached to the 'speciale', opinion is divided as to the advantage or disadvantage that the students are free to pass the exams in the order they themselves prefer: In some cases it may be an advantage that the 'speciale' is towards the end, but in others there is little doubt that the students are pitifully short of the kind of self-reliance and scholarly independence which they usually acquire in the process of writing the 'speciale' when they pass other exams before it. Some departments demand that the 'speciale' is <u>not</u> the last exam.

In addition to the 'speciale', the student will have to study a number of special fields in depth, usually within literature (i.e. different periods, genres); language (diachronically or synchronically; linguistics; grammar; phonetics); or social, pedagogical, or methodological fields.

In order to avoid intolerable specialization, students are required to pass at least one exam in literature and at least one in language at some departments, but from then on, they are free to concentrate on fields they like, or feel are best for their future chances of employment. At other departments, however, they may choose all their special fields from the same overall umbrella area (e.g. language), although it is always checked that they do not cover the same special field (or books from it) more than once.

As appears from the Table 3, the required number of special fields differs from department to department, but all told, they always add up to at least 2 years of study, in theory.

Most of them are, somehow or other, connected with courses given or classes offered at the departments, and the students tend to ask teachers who have conducted such courses or given these classes to act as examiners. But it is extremely difficult for a student to get sufficient information on a special field by attending classes only: classroom work must be supplemented with vast individual reading - and

lists of works consulted are recently handed in and approved by teachers before the actual exams.

Within some departments certain exams may be judged by internal moderation, but all departments have some exams which must be checked by outside moderators, as is the case with the exams at '1. del/bifag'.

The only exam found at all departments is translation. Oral and written proficiency is also tested at 'hovedfag', frequently in connection with some of the exams in special fields (see Table 3 on the next page).

The actual exams are carried out in a number of different ways, e.g. by papers which students compose over a six-day to six-week period; written exams under supervision (with or without dictionaries and textbooks); oral exams (possibly with some time for preparation) - but the actual procedures are not very relevant in this context.

## V.3 'Licentiatstudiet'

In practice both cand.phil.s and cand.mag.s are often qualified for research posts (either 2½ - 3 year ones, or those with tenure) because applicants are accepted to these posts on the basis of their research activities (cf. IV.0 above).

In principle and in theory, these posts should, however, primarily be open to the research students (postgraduate students, even though they do not rank so officially), the so-called 'licentiatstuderende'. The degree is still fairly new and, as mentioned, supplants the old 'mag.art.' whose main forte was a more thorough in-depth study of the fields studied by the 'hovedfag' candidates with an added emphasis on historical linguistics.

In the modern 'licentiatstudium', the students research a project, chosen by themselves, under the supervision of some qualified and experienced researcher. The duration is 2½ - 3 years. The project is completed with both thesis and a lecture. The degree translates as PhD, although the demand that the 'licentiatstuderende' must work on a highly individualistic project only, e.g. "Science Fiction, Seen as Ideologically Determined Mythological Structure", means that the degree lacks the breath and scope of the American PhD. There is, therefore, some fear that students who have taken this degree are really too specialised to be of any use even within the university world.

## V.4 General Assessment of Contents.

As hinted above (see IV.0 above) there has been a conscious shift in foreign-language teaching at university: Formerly the main emphasis was on a penetration of culture and historical approaches to the foreign language and literature, according to a much more formalised and rigid curriculum.

TABLE 3

COMPONENTS OF '2. del' AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN 1980/81

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

1. Speciale (written thesis; content area: optional)

2. Translation (written)
   Eng into Dk  Dk into Eng

Additional:

4 special fields leading to orals or written papers, one of the latter a six-week take-home essay.
Proficiency in speaking and writing tested as part of 2 of these fields.

GERMAN DEPARTMENT

1. Speciale (written thesis; content area: optional)

2. Translation (written)
   Dk into G  G into Dk

Additional:

5 special fields chosen by the students themselves, usually based on participation in 4 classes a week on the field, and rounded off with papers of 10-15 pages written at home, followed by an oral exam of 30 minutes on class-work and paper.
1 exam covering one of the three following disciplines:
(a) historial linguistics, or
(b) German culture in the Middle Ages, or (c) German literature 1600-1740. The exam marks the end of a two-hour course within one 'semester'. It varies from 2 to 4 hours, and as to the use or non-use of dictionaries etc., but is invariably supervised.
Proficiency in writing and speaking tested independently.

FRENCH DEPARTMENT

1. Speciale (written thesis; content area: optional)

2. Translation
   Dk into F : written
   F into Dk : oral

3. Old French (oral)

4. Modern grammar (oral)

Additional:

7 special fields, leading to 5 orals and 2 papers.
There are, however, some limitations on contents: 4 of the special fields must be within the time span from the Middle Ages to the present day. 1 must be about some linguistic topic; and 1 must be more in-depth than the other ones.
Proficiency in speaking is tested on topic chosen by student.
Proficiency in writing by means of one of the papers - a take-home - which must be written in French.

In content: modern linguistics, social and contemporary topics have now made their entry in modern curricula.

As to approach, or scholarly method: critical, analytical, and otherwise exclusive approaches are much more conspicuous than before (so that classes are sometimes advertised as "based on Marxist thinking"; "from an socio-historical point of view", "based on transformational grammar", etc.

The flexibility in the curricula especially within the '2.del', and the number of choices open to the students have increased dramatically. This is undoubtedly caused and supported by an increase in the staffs and hence, the number of classes: the exams today have much closer links with courses than, say, 20 years ago, when students would have to read most of the standardised, uniform textbooks on their own - even at 1. del. One interesting feature is that the very lack of control (or high degree of student responsibility) is that outstanding students doing the '1. del' may actually be better than some students doing the '2. del'. In such cases the only difference is that the latter have done their 'speciale'.

## VI.0 Classes and Teaching Methods.

Lessons are primarily the responsibility of individual teachers. Especially full-time staff may inform the curriculum committee (Studienævnet) what lessons they intend to give, usually stating content area (which may, however, follow from the umbrella bracketing, e.g. "Translation"), required reading, suggested reading, level ('1. del' or '2. del'), and possibly teaching methods, language used (this may follow from the language of the advertisement), and scholarly approach.

The curriculum committee coordinates these offers to accord with the requirements of the guidelines. It may suggest alterations, or ask that special content areas be taught, as well as employ the dwindling number of part-time teachers for specific classes. It then publishes the plans for the next semester. This is partly to permit students to plan ahead, possibly preparing for classes in advance - and to allow enough time for the booksellers to get books from abroad.

Most students on '1.del' will attend classes leading to the exams listed above (V.I.1-3), and possibly some of the electives In addition they are free to attend classes on '2. del' - and a few actually do so (there is frequently no distinct borderline).

On an average, students at '1. del' will attend somewhere between 8 and 20 hours of classes a week. The size of a class at the start of term tends to be c. 20-30, when students enroll for one specific series of courses (i.e. they are assigned to groups where all students do the phonetics, grammar, translation etc. classes together.

On '2. del' the classes offered by teachers must cover as wide a spectrum as possible of the content areas which are defined by the departmental guidelines. There are, in addition, some few innovative courses undertaken by individual teachers, or groups of teachers, possibly at the instigation of students. On an average - and with departmental variations - students attend from zero to 10 classes a week, averaging 4 to 8. Attendance varies a great deal: from 3 to 100 students, depending on content area, teaching methods (the large classes logically permit only lectures), and teacher personality.

As for teaching methods the most popular one with teachers is teacher-directed class-work (termed e.g. seminars, colloquies, discussion); followed by lectures (especially at the beginning of the class to establish the common ground); and by group work with set tasks and open discussions, or as a way for preparing lessons (i.e. as a method used outside classwork proper, directed and organised by the students).

Especially in the theoretical content areas (linguistics, grammar) most classes are conducted in Danish, but in literature, many classes are conducted in the foreign language and so, of course, are classes in oral proficiency, which are always conducted by native speakers.

Native teachers employed on the staffs usually offer classes in the foreign language. Some of these teachers have tenure, whereas a few (at the German and French Departments) are exchange teachers, or employed only for 2-3 years.

The widespread use of Danish by Danish staff is based on three factors

1. The emphasis on communicative competence at the lower levels in the school system often makes it difficult for students to express themselves correctly and precisely on finer theoretical points in the foreign language.
2. Tradition - possibly because teachers formerly had had less contact with the foreign languages they taught than they have today, and this attitude has been accepted uncritically until quite recently. The question is, however, the subject of debate at some departments.
3. Many Danish teachers are aware that since they are not native speakers, they may pass on old-fashioned pronunciations and outdated expressions to students.

## VII.0 Language Proficiency.

Unlike the Danish primary and secondary school systems (the 'folkeskole' and the 'gymnasium') the university language departments must strive for perfection also at the purely normative and formal level, rather than only "communicative competence". This is justified because the university graduates in foreign languages must be models of correctness and of indisputable mastery of the foreign languages, e.g. as teachers.

Of course, it is appreciated that this ideal goal is rarely, if ever, achieved by Danish graduates.

For the purposes of this overview, it is convenient to divide proficiency in foreign-language teaching into oral, written, and translation proficiencies.

At school, i.e. the 'folkeskole' and 'gymnasium', the students will usually have attained a passable level of oral proficiency, but with the emphasis on "communicative competence" rather than correctness, university is faced with problems concerning pronunciation, intonation (especially in English), fluency, a varied vocabulary, and correctness. A whole array of approaches is employed to improve these components of oral proficiency. When student fluency is poor at the beginning of the university studies (French, German), or when students are identified as poor speakers by means of diagnostic tests (English), there are offers of (a) conversation classes with 10 to 15 participants; (b) language laboratory sessions (10 to 20 participants) with indiviadualised correction, either as actual sessions or as optional classes where the students can attend if they wish to.

Other approaches are more theoretical: phonetics (general and specific), phonetic transcriptions, sometimes intonation patterns, done in theory and practised, or demonstrated on e.g. tape-recording).

Students are also encouraged to go to lectures by visiting native scholars, at university, at the British Council, at the Institut Français and the Alliance Française, at the Deutsches Kulturinstitut, and similar institutions; to listen to broadcasts from the countries whose language they study; and to attend summer-courses (for foreigners) in the foreign countries, if they are unable to go to university there. There is little chance of finding out to what extent the students follow these suggestions.

Other classes must have some - albeit indirect - influence on oral proficiency, e.g. literature classes conducted in the foreign language, reading out, and discussion of difficult passages in class.

As mentioned above, oral proficiency is tested both at '1.del' and at '2.del'. At 1. del it is always outside content areas, at '2.del' within content areas in English; and independently in French and German. At all events, oral fluency is of paramount importance to those who aim to become teachers at the 'gymnasium' and teachers' training colleges, since most of their classes in foreign languages are conducted in the foreign language.

Proficiency in writing is covered poorly in the actual teaching, in so far as there are only optional (English) or brief obligatory (French, German) courses in this field. Once again,

other classes, e.g. on literature where students may write essays in the foreign language, as well as the classes in translation are tacitly assumed to improve student proficiency. The philosophy appears to be correct if the marks given at the relevant exams reflect the students' proficiency in writing.

Translation is taught, or rather practised in courses which are well attended by students. The usual method of teaching translation is to hand out texts for written translation, correct the answers, and then discuss some points, especially in grammar and semantics. There are some attempts by individual teachers at supplementing this by means of more theoretical classes on translation within some departments.

It must be stressed that translation is taught both from and into the foreign language. One reason is that few foreigners know Danish sufficiently well to translate from it, i.e. the Danes have to take care of the communication to the outside world themselves; another reason is that translation into Danish is used at the 'folkeskole' and 'gymnasium' as a shortcut to check understanding. One interesting side-effect of the pivotal importance of translation in foreign-language teaching is that the demands of a mastery of Danish are higher at the foreign-language departments than at the Department of Nordic (i.e. Danish).

Translation is obligatory at both '1.' and '2. del'. The demands to loyalty, stylistics, vocabulary, and phraseology are higher at '2. del' than at '1. del'. Specific and highly technical terminology are purposely avoided in translation exercises, texts, and exams: the focus is on idiomatics, and formal correctness: the reason is that most students should be well versed in the techniques of translation, rather than technical or professional translators.

A reasonable attempt at complete cultural and linguistic penetration is usually suggested sometime during '2. del', where students are advised to go and study at a local university in the foreign country. Danish students who have sufficient financial backing (private means, or grants) usually find it easy to get admitted at French, German, British, and American Universities. These arrangements are usually made on an individual basis - although the English department has a systematic programme in this field, and the German Department has a minor pool of German grants.

## VIII.0 Concluding Remarks.

The Danish system in foreign-language teaching is different from that of most other countries. The Danish foreign-language graduates compare favourably with those of most other comparable nations - and in international contexts (organisations) they appear to be more flexible, more independent, more critical, and better at solving specific problems than many others.

Of course, they are not perfect. But their fairly high standard can be ascribed to a number of factors:

1. Denmark has a fairly long tradition for systematic and scholarly treatment of foreign languages and foreign-language teaching (50 - 150 years).

2. The proximity of the countries whose languages are studied; Danish affluence (which makes travelling abroad common); and personal contact with foreigners (about 50% of all Danes spend at least 3 days abroad each year).

3. The enormous amount of foreign language material used, televised, or broadcast, by the electronic media.

4. Finally, it is reasonable to assume that the wide variety of approaches at university (e.g. the large cultural, theoretical, and social contents of the studies) reflects on student proficiency: they have to read and discuss a wide variety of topics related to the foreign-language area.

Turning specifically to the very flexible curricula the advantages are at least three: The first one is that students can find out on their own and without any interference from others if languages are not their field. The other advantage is that the "survivors", i.e. those who graduate, are able to fit into more slots than they themselves seem to realise at present. The third one is, as hinted, that graduates are able to conduct their work in a highly responsible and competent way.

The disadvantages are, however, equally obvious: there is a glaring and ridiculous gap between the curricula and official norms, and the actual length of study. There is often a shocking lack of contact between staff and students which undoubtedly accounts for the high drop-out rate.

In spite of the disadvantages there seems to be a surprisingly wide-spread feeling of satisfaction with the system. 1)

NOTE

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